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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Nominations Requested for Montana's Tourism Awards

Helena, MT – January 31, 2007 – The Governor's Tourism Advisory Council (TAC) is accepting nominations for the Montana 2007 Tourism Awards. Nominations for Tourism Person of the Year, Tourism Community of the Year, Tourism Event of the Year and Tourism Partnership of the Year will be accepted. "It is vitally important to recognize the contributions tourism makes to our state" cites Governor Brian Schweitzer, "I encourage you to take the time to nominate those that work tirelessly to keep tourism a strong and substantial cog in our economic wheel."

The awards recognize individuals, events, or communities whose efforts to promote or develop Montana's tourism opportunities, this year or for a series of years, have preserved or enhanced tourism's role in Montana's economy.

The award winners will be announced at the 33rd Annual Governor's Conference on Tourism and Recreation scheduled for April 2-3, 2007, at the Red Lion in Helena, Montana.

Nomination forms are available from the Department of Commerce Montana Promotion Division by calling Barb Sanem at 406-841-2769 or e-mail bsanem@mt.gov. The forms are also available electronically at www.travelmontana.mt.gov/conference/awards.asp. The deadline for nominations is 5 p.m. March 12, 2007.

The 2006 award winners included Tourism Person of the Year Jay Robson of Dollar-Rent-A-Car and Community of the Year Fort Benton, Montana. The Lady Cameron Heritage Celebration and PBS Premiere won in the Tourism Event category and the City of Red Lodge, Community of Cooke City, Friends of the Beartooth All-American Road and the Red Lodge Area Chamber of Commerce were awarded the Tourism Partnership of the Year.

Tourism and recreation is one of Montana's largest industries. In 2005, 10.1 million people visited Montana spending \$2.76 billion during their stay. Over 45,940 jobs are directly and indirectly supported by nonresident travel, resulting in over \$953 million in total personal income for Montana residents.

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